

area of education and science around the world. The U.S. participation in such an organization can only strengthen its ability to carry out the fine work it performs every day. In fact, the United Kingdom, which also withdrew its support from UNESCO in step with the United States in 1984, had returned as a full member of this worthy organization.

The recent decision by the Taliban government in Afghanistan to destroy the historical Buddhist statues demonstrates that the preservation and restoration of cultural treasures sometimes cannot be left solely in the hands of national governments. From preserving these statues to preserving Timbuktu, the role of UNESCO is still important today.

During a week in which we lost two important seats on the United Nations commissions, it is important we send a message to the international community that the United States is ready and willing to participate whenever it is called to duty.

Therefore, I strongly urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I would just note in response to my colleagues discussion here that I do not believe the Taliban asked permission from UNESCO when they blew up those statues, and of course they never would.

That is the whole point here. UNESCO is irrelevant in this whole issue.

Mr. Chairman, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), the distinguished chairman of the committee.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Chairman, I want to lend my unqualified support for the Tancredo amendment. There are one or two organizations in the world we do not have to join and do not have to subsidize to survive, and one is certainly UNESCO.

\$65 million a year at least for 2 years takes money away from the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization, things that are useful, that do have an agenda, that works for the people.

This money the State Department does not want, has not asked for it. If we go ahead with this, we are going to have to take it from something else. We withdrew in 1984, and we have gotten along famously since then without this heavy subsidization to an organization whose aims are amorphous at best.

One of the things they do, I find this hard to believe, is they are engaged in a project of renovating downtown Havana. Now, that may be a wonderful thing if one lives in Havana, but I do not see why the taxpayers from my district should pay for something like that.

The sense of taking money away because of the Human Rights Commission and thrusting it forward because

someone thinks it is a good idea to belong to UNESCO does not make a lot of sense. I think we can save the \$65 million. What a wonderful thing that would be.

We do not need to join UNESCO. Let those other countries that like that sort of thing do it. So I would support the Tancredo amendment with great enthusiasm.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I thank the distinguished gentleman for yielding me this time. Let me applaud both the chairman and the ranking member for bringing this important legislation to the floor of the House.

I think if one asks the American people, one will find out that the American people are concerned about world affairs; and to dismiss the myth, they are concerned and they want to be engaged.

So I come to the floor of the House to, first of all, support the United Nations and offer the fact that we are engaged, we are in conversation, we are speaking to individuals in countries that we heretofore have opportunity.

World peace is truly more viable than world war. I think it is important to support UNESCO. We need to understand what it does. It promotes free press. It promotes education. It only costs 25 cents per American. It allows us to promote the cultural values of these Nations and have the cultural exchange of these Nations.

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And I believe that we should stand here today and acknowledge the importance of world affairs, the importance of America being engaged in world affairs, the importance of freedom, and the importance of the United Nations. And I hope as we do that, we will find that this Nation will get its seat on the Human Rights Commission and will lead out in world affairs in the 21st century.

Mr. Chairman, I rise to oppose the Tancredo amendment to H.R. 1646, the State Authorization Bill. This amendment would strike language in the bill directing the President to rejoin the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and strike language authorizing payment of the U.S. assessed contribution to the organization.

I strongly urge you to vote "no" on the Tancredo amendment. It fails to recognize the great progress UNESCO has achieved in reforming its management and mission. It fails to appreciate the significant benefits Americans would enjoy with U.S. membership in UNESCO. And it fails to seize the opportunity to exercise American leadership and further our national interests.

When the United States withdrew from UNESCO in 1984 under Secretary of State George Shultz, I fully supported the decision, as did many of our Democratic and Repub-

lican colleagues. At the time, UNESCO was chronically mismanaged and corrupt, and had become a forum for spreading anti-American propaganda and suppressing free speech.

But since then, UNESCO has reinvented itself. Under the leadership of its new Director General, Koichiro Matsuura, UNESCO has adopted a culture of reform that has yielded concrete progress toward improving management, stamping out corruption, streamlining personnel, and putting the organization's financial house in order. Today, UNESCO is an efficient and effective champion of free speech, education and scientific collaboration worldwide.

This dramatic progress has not gone unnoticed. In 1993, the General Accounting Office (GAO) audited UNESCO and concluded that it had made "good progress" toward implementing improvements and "demonstrated a commitment to management reform." And as a recent article appearing in the International Herald Tribune on the reverse side observes, UNESCO has overcome ideological divisions to forge a "new spirit of activism" that "aims to spread knowledge and preserve diversity." In light of these changes at UNESCO, former Secretary of State Shultz, in a letter dated September 26 of last year, reversed his position and indicated his support for America's reentry into UNESCO. Secretary Shultz was right to advocate U.S. withdrawal from UNESCO in 1984—and he is right to advocate U.S. reentry into UNESCO today.

Membership in UNESCO is clearly in U.S. National interests. As the Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet recently testified, the greatest future threats to U.S. national security from abroad include instability caused by official corruption, endemic poverty, mass illiteracy, environmental disruptions, and the spread of infectious diseases. UNESCO addresses each of these emerging threats by promoting good government, universal education, sustainable development, and preventative disease control. U.S. membership in UNESCO will enable us to better combat the threats Americans face in the 21st century.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" to the Tancredo amendment tomorrow and support strengthening America's leadership role by rejoining UNESCO.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Chairman, I thank my friend for yielding me this time, and I rise in opposition to the Tancredo amendment.

Like the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), I fully supported the decision of the Reagan administration to withdraw the U.S. from UNESCO because of its anti-American, anti-Western, and anti-Israeli stance. Today, however, UNESCO has reformed itself, improved its management, stamped out corruption, and put UNESCO's financial house in order.

UNESCO is no longer the proponent of anti-Western propaganda it once was. It no longer espouses anti-U.S., anti-Israeli, and anti-Western rhetoric. And we can see today that UNESCO is the U.N. agency for press freedom, setting up an uncensored newspaper and broadcasters in the former Yugoslavia, East Timor, Burundi. It is advancing